

To: Debbie Powers

Office Manager, Board of Selectmen

Town of Rockport, Mass

From: Laura Fillmore Evans

Cc: Janet Breiter, Diane Cartwright

Re: Ad Hoc Water Committee (AHWC) Report for 2015

4 January 2016

This year has been one of reorganization and repurposing for the Ad Hoc Water Committee (AHWC). While the majority of the volunteers on the committee voted to disband the committee prior to Spring Town Meeting in 2015, one member, Laura Evans, spoke in favor of continuing the Town's longest standing volunteer committee (established in 1980), suggesting that a need continues for ongoing citizen vigilance concerning our Town water supply. Town Meeting voted to keep the AHWC alive, and in late Spring, Janet Breiter and Diane Cartwright joined the committee and were sworn in.

Our initial work started in May and focused on determining if Rockport had conducted a federally-mandated Water Vulnerability Assessment Study, in compliance with the Patriot Act. The process was circuitous, to say the least, but our perseverance yielded positive results! Largely through the facilitation of Police Chief Horvath and Lt. Schmink, resulting from our meeting with them, the Ad Hoc Water Committee can report that the Police, the DPW, and the EPA all tell us that Rockport is in compliance, in this regard. It is our understanding that this confidential document resides with direct oversight by the Water Filtration Plant Supervisor Chris Martin, and the Vulnerability Assessment was conducted by a

chemical engineer and licensed personnel in 2002/ 2013 as coordinated by former Plant Supervisor Roy Lee. We further understand that this Vulnerability Assessment study needs to be reviewed and updated at least annually and we plan to pursue that status prior to Spring Town Meeting, 2016. This Water Vulnerability Assessment plan and documentation is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information act due to the sensitive nature of the material and homeland security implications.

The Ad Hoc Water Committee is discerning its mission moving forward. We have discussed an advocacy role to “conserve and preserve” our Town’s most-precious drinking water sources and adjunct bodies. Currently, we are experiencing uncertainty about how the Ad Hoc Water Committee can fulfill its mission (as posted on the Town web site) of “assisting the Director [of the DPW] in the investigation [of] and mak[ing] recommendations relating to the Town’s water supply” – from a non-engineering point of view. We are supposed to have seven members, all registered voters, including a designee or member of the Selectmen and a designee or member of the Board of Health. We have three members at this time and no member or designee from the Selectmen or Board of Health.

We are also questioning how if at all we should interact with other Town bodies to collaborate on water-related matters. We have discussed whether it would be useful, for example, to build awareness about water saving measures at home and work, or to disseminate information about the proper disposal of pharmaceuticals to safeguard our water supply, or even enlist a team of volunteers to monitor our potentially-vulnerable water supply. We have considered investigating potential grants to underwrite water “conserve and preserve” initiatives. We welcome input from others, particularly the Board of Selectmen, on what the Town water-related priorities are and what our “process” should be as we move forward, especially if we succeed in attracting other citizen participation.